

whole. Mandy is one whose door is always open and whose creative input is always welcome.

Her legacy on this committee will last long after she leaves Capitol Hill. As a committee conservative, Mandy will further the cause of freedom wherever she goes.

I wish Mandy all the best. I thank her for her exemplary work.

RECORD-BREAKING NUMBER OF NEW JOBS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we heard last night at the State of the Union Address, President Biden's first 2 years delivered a record-breaking number of new jobs. In total, 12 million new jobs were created for hard-working Americans. I repeat that: 12 million new jobs.

That is as many jobs in 2 years as any President has created in a 4-year term. America also has seen the lowest unemployment rate, at 3.4 percent, since 54 years ago.

The Biden administration fought hard to deliver big results for Medicare and other programs to help seniors and working families. Democrats were able to make changes that will help millions of Americans by lowering prescription drug prices for Medicare patients.

The following improvements have also taken place.

Insulin has been capped at \$35 per month for Medicare patients. Mr. Speaker, that strikes home because we have a lot of diabetes in my own family.

Medicare can now negotiate the price of high-cost drugs, which further drops prices. We also provide additional free vaccines, including for shingles, pneumonia, and hepatitis, under the Medicare program.

On top of all this, we expanded the Affordable Care Act, which will lower premiums for 13 million Americans.

The President's economic agenda is generating investments across the country and revitalizing communities left behind.

We are giving families more breathing room and standing up for workers by banning noncompete agreements; rewarding work, not wealth; and fighting to ensure that everyone can earn a living wage.

For the next 2 years, Democrats will work together to fight for our hard-working families. The President knows that we must finish the job with affordable childcare, home care, sick leave, paid leave, and the child tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, we must put people over politics and solutions over rhetoric.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF ZACH DIDIER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Zach Didier, a beloved member of our community in Rocklin who tragically passed away from fentanyl shortly after Christmas Day a little over 2 years ago, in 2020.

I would also like to take a moment to introduce the American people to Zach's parents, Laura Didier and Chris Didier, who are with us today in the gallery. I was honored to have Laura and Chris as my guests for last night's State of the Union. They have worked tirelessly to honor Zach's life through raising awareness of the fentanyl crisis and have undoubtedly saved many lives.

This is Zach. He was 17 years old, a senior at Whitney High School. He was an Eagle Scout, soccer player, star of the high school musical, and straight-A student. He had just applied to college, and his parents had to go through the gut-wrenching experience of watching acceptance envelopes arrive from California's leading universities.

I would like to offer a moment of silence to honor the memory and life of Zach Didier.

Mr. Speaker, Zach had no history of drug use. He was the type of young man that parents hope their child would become. I know how proud of him Chris and Laura are.

His story shows that the poison of fentanyl is a risk to everyone. No community is safe from it. No family can be unaware of the danger.

Fentanyl has become the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 45, more than car accidents, more than suicides, more than anything.

Over 73,000 Americans died from fentanyl this past year. That amounts to 200 deaths a day, about 1 every 7 minutes.

Though lethality of fentanyl is unlike any other drug, it is about 100 times more potent than morphine. Two milligrams, or the amount that fits on the tip of a pencil, is a deadly dose. It is now very commonly added to street pills, such that 98 percent of pills on the street are fake, and by some estimates, 60 percent have the potential to be lethal.

Many of the victims are teenagers, young people, people with no prior drug use. There are many causes connected to this, of course: mental health, teenagers who are just stressed with the stresses of school, and certainly the isolation during the whole COVID era.

They often purchase these fake pills on social media over the internet. The dealers sometimes drive and deliver them straight to the victims' homes.

What can we do? Well, the first and most important thing, perhaps, is to continue to raise awareness. Many Americans aren't aware of the severity of this crisis until it is too late.

Chris and Laura Didier have done 45 school assemblies this year alone, reaching tens of thousands of students and families, and have saved many lives, I know, in the process. Every school across the country needs to

have a strategy for making students and families aware of the dangers.

Secondly, we need to do much more to prevent fentanyl from flowing into this country. We know that the southern border is a primary source. In 2022 alone, the DEA seized 379 million lethal doses of fentanyl. That is enough to kill every single American. Securing the border would diminish the availability of fentanyl and make it more difficult to traffic into the United States.

Finally, we need to hold dealers accountable. We need appropriate criminal laws to punish those who peddle life-ending pills to unsuspecting victims. We need to have consequences that are commensurate with the gravity, the evil, of this offense to deter those who would prey on innocent Americans. This requires State and Federal governments to revisit their drug laws in many cases. It also requires prosecutors to make full use of the tools at their disposal.

I applaud Placer County District Attorney Morgan Gire, from my district, who has provided a roadmap by charging fentanyl dealers with murder because that is what it is.

The good news is we are seeing growing momentum for addressing this crisis with the seriousness that it deserves and requires. I am grateful that President Biden devoted a portion of his State of the Union Address to addressing it.

I am grateful that Chris and Laura Didier were here last night to see that because they have played such a large role in working with many other families who have lost loved ones and are raising public consciousness.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time that we need to follow words with action. I look forward to working with the President and everyone in this Congress, on a bipartisan basis, to help our country turn the corner on this crisis.

MEMBERS MOCKING GUN VIOLENCE BY WEARING ASSAULT RIFLE PINS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, last week was National Gun Violence Survivors Week, when we reflect on the toll that gun violence takes on all of us.

It is disgraceful enough that our Republican colleagues are unwilling to confront gun violence as the leading cause of death among American children, but last week, several Members of this body chose to mock the somber week by wearing assault rifle pins.

Those Members paraded through the Halls of Congress and on this floor, celebrating the weapon of choice for military combatants, mass murderers, and those who have fetishized the Second Amendment.

This shameless gesture was received loud and clear by Americans, including

a mother in my district who recently lost her son to gun violence.

She called my office after seeing those Members, distraught by their casual cruelty and their dangerous promotion of violence.

I rise today as the voice in Congress for that brokenhearted mother to make this very clear: House Democrats are united in the fight to end senseless gun violence. We want to advance real solutions, and we will always stand up to extremist behavior that threatens the safety of our communities.

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RECOGNIZING BETSY WALLS, PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAILBLAZER

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a constituent whose decades of public health service have made our community stronger.

Betsy Walls is being recognized by the CDC and Prevention as a public health emergency preparedness trailblazer from Pennsylvania. She is one of 48 Americans being recognized for their tireless work to protect our communities from a range of public health threats.

Betsy's distinguished career in serving her community includes serving as a flight nurse for the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, where she retired as a lieutenant colonel; she spent 30 years at Delaware County Memorial Hospital, first as a staff nurse, then a head nurse, then an evening supervisor, and, finally, as director of staff education; and she served as director of personal health at the Chester County Health Department for 18 years.

Betsy's commitment to ensuring our community is ready and able to respond to disasters has touched thousands of lives. Our community owes Betsy Walls an enormous debt of gratitude for the strong foundation she has built to keep our communities strong and healthy for years to come.

RECOGNIZING PHILADELPHIA EAGLES CHANGEMAKER AWARD WINNER, DR. RUTH ABAYA

Ms. SCANLON. The Philadelphia Eagles are headed to the Super Bowl this weekend, and I want to recognize the team's 2022 Inspire Change Changemaker Award winner, Dr. Ruth Abaya, an emergency physician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and a scholar of the hospital's Center for Violence Prevention.

As our country works to tackle gun violence, Dr. Abaya is on the front lines, treating this issue like the public health crisis that it is.

In her role as program manager for the Injury Prevention Program at Philadelphia's Department of Health, she is helping to identify the most promising practices for violence prevention and intervention for young people in our region.

A public health approach to gun violence requires a comprehensive, multifaceted response driven by research and data. It means a focus on prevention, in addition to treatment. Dr. Abaya's work is moving us toward the solutions

we need to face this crisis head-on and give our children brighter futures.

I am grateful for Dr. Abaya's dedication to making our community a safer place for everyone and to the Philadelphia Eagles for their support for her program.

This weekend, go Birds.

A FRIEND CLOSER THAN A BROTHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, Jesus said: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

These words guided the life of the late Sam Johnson who served the great State of Texas 27 years in this House, 6 years in the Texas House, and nearly 7 years as a POW in the infamous Alcatraz annex of the Hanoi Hilton.

Mr. Speaker, if you had the honor to shake Sam's broken hand, then you felt the permanent damage that he endured for our Nation. Sam Johnson laid down his life for his friends throughout his life. It is an honor to serve in the House seat where he honorably served.

Those words of Jesus guided me through my military career and through my introduction to the 118th Congress that first week, and they will continue to guide me just as they did my friend Sam Johnson.

Our Nation is facing tremendous uncertainty. Misguided policies are causing inflation, incentivizing criminals, promoting out-of-control spending, and projecting America as weak on the world stage.

Now is the time for Congress to restore fiscal restraint, embrace family values, offer certainty to our citizens, and stand firm against tyranny that encroaches on freedom around the world.

There is a model for our Nation's leaders to follow. The Texas model provides a roadmap to guide this House in its effort to restore America's future.

The Texas economy ranked ninth of all nations by GDP, ahead of countries like Canada, Australia, and Russia. The Texas delegation in Congress has the most Republican Members because people are flocking to Texas for economic prosperity, improved quality of life, and greater opportunity. That description is the American Dream. But that dream should not be limited by geography.

Everything that is right about America can be found in Texas: from the feedlots in the panhandle where I grew up to ports along the Gulf Coast, from farms in the Rio Grande Valley to the piney woods of east Texas, and from the oil patch to military bases scattered across the State. Texas has agriculture, manufacturing, finance, defense, and tourism. Big cities and small towns—Texas has it all.

Unfortunately, we also feel the pain of what is wrong with America: a flood

of illegal immigrants crossing our border along with drugs like fentanyl and victims of human trafficking. Texas families are hurting just like other families across this great land. Crime is rising, inflation is still out of control, and children are being exploited right before our eyes.

The day after the November election, pundits called the GOP weak. Two months later, they called us crazy for working to restore the House to the way it operated for over 200 years. We worked until we achieved the rules that govern a Congress that now operates efficiently. I believe that, standing shoulder to shoulder with Speaker MCCARTHY, this Congress with these rules will help lead America back to its place as a beacon to the free world.

The GOP has not yet gained the trust of many Americans. My belief is that if we hold the line on spending, commit to defending our borders, and resolve to embrace the values of our forefathers, then we will earn America's broad support.

We—all of us right here in this Chamber—wrestled over the rules a few weeks ago. We wrestled hard—just as JIM JORDAN wrestled back in his day—and I am proud to say that this Congress is off to a pretty good start with bold leaders who are making a difference.

The days ahead are days of promise. They will be long days with hard decisions and tough votes, but if we endeavor to embrace the encouraging words of Jesus to sacrifice for our friends, then I believe that we will continue to be that shining example to the world.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the struggle over ideals in this Chamber is appropriate, and it makes us stronger.

The question is: Will we hold the line, especially when attacked by those who oppose liberty?

The preamble of our Constitution speaks of securing the "Blessings of Liberty." Let's commit to holding the line and to standing together to those opposing American exceptionalism. Let our example to the American people and the world be our commitment to preserving liberty.

Will we sacrifice?

Will we lay down our lives for liberty?

I pray we will.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, Black history is American history. As Black History Month begins, all across the country we see radical, rightwing elected officials attempting to whitewash American history and ban Black history from being taught in our classrooms.

This is, Mr. Speaker, unmasked white supremacy at its core. You cannot teach the truth about American history without Black history.